

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:  
provisioning a symmetric cryptographic key across multiple clients through multiple embedded agents, each client having a corresponding one of the embedded agents, each embedded agent to store the symmetric cryptographic key in a storage accessible to the embedded agent and not directly accessible to a host processor on the client having the embedded agent; and  
providing access to an encrypted traffic flow in a network to one of the clients if the one of the clients is authenticated with the key, the providing including  
the one of the clients ~~receiving~~ detecting a message requesting a secure network connection for the encrypted traffic flow,  
in response to detecting the message, the embedded agent of the one of the clients verifying, prior to any allowing of the requested secure network connection, ~~the embedded agent of the one of the clients verifying~~ that a platform of the one of the clients is not in a compromised state at a time before providing access to the encrypted traffic flow, and  
in response to ~~the message requesting the secure connection and~~ the verifying, the embedded agent of the one of the clients providing the key and an assertion that the one of the clients is not compromised to a verification entity on the network.
2. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein provisioning the key through the embedded agents further comprises provisioning the key through an embedded agent having network access via a network link not visible to a host operating system (OS) running on the one of the clients.
3. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 2, wherein providing access to the traffic flow if the one of the clients is authenticated comprises the embedded agent authenticating the one of the clients over the network line not visible to the host OS.

4. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein providing access to the traffic flow further comprises providing multiple clients access with the key to nodes in the network, the nodes in the network to decrypt the traffic flow and subsequently encrypt the traffic flow to transmit the traffic to a next node in the network.
5. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, further comprising updating at a client the symmetric cryptographic key provisioned across the multiple clients through a public and private key exchange with a public and private key associated with the client.
6. (Canceled).
7. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, further comprising the embedded agent indicating to a remote network device if the one of the clients is compromised.
8. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, further comprising the embedded agent foreclosing network access to the one of the clients if the one of the clients is compromised.
9. (Original) A method according to claim 1, further comprising the embedded agent performing cryptographic functions on data with the key to authenticate data with the key.
10. (Original) A method according to claim 1, further comprising the embedded agent including a derivative of the key in a header of data to be transmitted to authenticate the data with the key.
11. (Currently Amended) An apparatus comprising:  
a host platform on the apparatus including a host processor;

a secure memory not visible to applications and an operating system (OS) running on the host platform; and

an embedded computational device communicatively coupled with the host platform, the embedded device to have a network link transparent to the host processor and the OS, the embedded device to manage a cryptographic key shared among the apparatus and network endpoints to be used to communicate with a server over the network, to receive the cryptographic key on the transparent link and authenticate the apparatus, and to store the cryptographic key in the secure memory, the embedded computational device further to ~~receive~~ detect a request for a secure network connection providing access to an encrypted traffic flow in the network, the embedded computational device further to verify, in response to detecting the request for the secure network connection and prior to any allowing of the requested secure network connection, that the host platform is not in a compromised state at a time before providing access to the encrypted traffic flow, and in response to ~~the request for the secure connection and~~ the verifying, the embedded computational device further to provide the cryptographic key and an assertion that the apparatus is not compromised to a verification entity on the network.

12. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the embedded device to have transparent network link comprises the embedded device to have a network connection not accessible by the host platform, the link to comply with the transport layer security (TLS) protocol.

13. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the embedded device to have a transparent network link comprises the embedded device to have a network connection not accessible by the host platform, the link to comply with the secure sockets layer (SSL) protocol.

14. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the embedded device to authenticate the apparatus comprises the embedded device to verify the identity of the apparatus to a network switching device with the key, the key to also be used by the network endpoints to verify their respective identities to the network switching device, and the

network switching device to decrypt encrypted traffic from the apparatus and the network endpoints.

15. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the embedded device to authenticate the apparatus comprises the embedded device to hash traffic to be transmitted with the key.

16. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the embedded device to authenticate the apparatus comprises the embedded device to perform cryptographic services with the key on traffic to be transmitted.

17. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the embedded device to authenticate the apparatus comprises the embedded device to include a derivative of the key in a header of traffic to be transmitted.

18. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 11, further comprising a second embedded computational device, the second embedded device integrated on the host platform, to verify the security of the host platform.

19. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 18, wherein the first embedded device to not authenticate the apparatus if the second embedded device determines the host platform is not secure.

20. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 18, further comprising a bi-directional private bus between the first and second embedded devices.

21. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 11, further comprising a counter mode hardware cryptographical module on the host platform to encipher traffic with the cryptographic key and further provide a counter mode enciphering of the enciphered traffic.

22. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:

a host platform including a host processor;  
a digital signal processor (DSP) coupled with the host platform; and  
an embedded chipset including a secure key storage module to perform cryptographic key management of a shared cryptographic key with the secure key storage module and a private communication channel accessible to the chipset and not the host platform, and to access an image of the host platform on a flash accessible to the DSP and not to the host processor to determine the integrity of the host platform, the shared cryptographic key to be used by the host platform to encipher data and other networked devices within a virtual private network, wherein the embedded chipset to ~~receive~~ detect a request for a secure network connection providing access to an encrypted traffic flow in the virtual private network, the embedded chipset further to verify, in response to detecting the request for the secure network connection and prior to any allowing of the requested secure network connection, that the host platform is not in a compromised state at a time before providing access to the encrypted traffic flow, and in response to ~~the request for the secure connection~~ and the verifying, the embedded chipset further to provide the cryptographic key and an assertion that the apparatus is not compromised to a verification entity on the virtual private network.

23. (Original) A system according to claim 22, wherein the embedded chipset to perform cryptographic key distribution with the private communication channel comprises the embedded chipset to perform cryptographic key distribution with a communication channel complying with the transport layer security (TLS) protocol.

24. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 22, wherein the embedded chipset comprises an embedded controller agent and an embedded firmware agent, the firmware agent to perform the verification that the host platform is not in the compromised state, and the controller agent to operate the private communication channel and manage access by the host platform to secure network connections.

25. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 24, further comprising a bi-directional private communication path between the embedded controller agent and the

embedded firmware agent to allow the agents to interoperate outside a context of the host platform.

26. (Original) A system according to claim 22, further comprising the embedded chipset to hash traffic to be transmitted with the key to authenticate the system to one of the other networked devices.

27. (Original) A system according to claim 22, further comprising the embedded chipset to perform cryptographic services with the key on traffic to be transmitted to authenticate the system to one of the other networked devices.

28. (Original) A system according to claim 22, further comprising the embedded chipset to include a derivative of the key in a header of traffic to be transmitted to authenticate the system to one of the other networked devices.

29. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture comprising a tangible machine accessible medium having content stored thereon to provide instructions to cause a machine to perform operations including:

provisioning a symmetric cryptographic key across multiple clients through multiple embedded agents, each client having one of the embedded agents, each embedded agent to store the symmetric cryptographic key in a storage accessible to the embedded agent and not directly accessible to a host processor on the client; and

providing access to an encrypted traffic flow in a network to one of the clients if the one of the clients is authenticated with the key, the providing including

the one of the clients ~~receiving~~ detecting a message requesting a secure network connection for the encrypted traffic flow,

in response to detecting the message, the embedded agent of the one of the clients verifying, prior to any allowing of the requested secure network connection, ~~the embedded agent of the one of the clients verifying~~ that a platform of the one of the clients is not in a compromised state at a time before providing access to the encrypted traffic flow, and

in response to ~~the message requesting the secure connection and~~ the verifying, the embedded agent of the one of the clients providing the key and an assertion that the one of the clients is not compromised to a verification entity on the network.

30. (Previously Presented) An article of manufacture according to claim 29, wherein the content to provide instruction to cause the machine to perform operations including provisioning the key through the embedded agents further comprises the content to provide instruction to cause the machine to perform operations including provisioning the key through an embedded agent having network access via a network link not visible to a host operating system (OS) running on the one of the clients.

31. (Previously Presented) An article of manufacture according to claim 30, wherein the content to provide instruction to cause the machine to perform operations including providing access to the traffic flow if the one of the clients is authenticated comprises the content to provide instruction to cause the machine to perform operations including authenticating the one of the clients with the embedded agent over the network line not visible to the host OS.

32. (Original) An article of manufacture according to claim 29, wherein the content to provide instruction to cause the machine to perform operations including providing access to the traffic flow further comprises the content to provide instruction to cause the machine to perform operations including providing multiple clients access with the key to nodes in the network, the nodes in the network to decrypt the traffic flow and subsequently encrypt the traffic flow to transmit the traffic to a next node in the network.

33. (Original) An article of manufacture according to claim 29, further comprising the content to provide instruction to cause the machine to perform operations including updating at a client the symmetric cryptographic key provisioned across the multiple clients through a public and private key exchange with a public and private key associated the client.

34. (Canceled).

35. (Previously Presented) An article of manufacture according to claim 29, further comprising the content to provide instruction to cause the machine to perform operations including indicating with the embedded agent to a remote network device if the one of the clients is compromised.

36. (Previously Presented) An article of manufacture according to claim 29, further comprising the content to provide instruction to cause the machine to perform operations including foreclosing with the embedded agent network access to the one of the clients if the one of the clients is compromised.

37. (Original) An article of manufacture according to claim 29, further comprising the content to provide instruction to cause the machine to perform operations including performing cryptographic functions on data with the key to authenticate data with the key.

38. (Original) An article of manufacture according to claim 29, further comprising the content to provide instruction to cause the machine to perform operations including placing a derivative of the key in a header of data to be transmitted to authenticate the data with the key.